



Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment

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Job Overview

Machines just seem to run better when they are clean. Appearances do count; for example, who would want to do business with a company that never cleaned their trucks or moving equipment? Dirt on one surface can transfer to another, which means that boxes carried or moved by dirty equipment will show the signs of not being handled and treated with care.

In addition, trucks often travel the highways, and each truck displaying a name and/or logo is a reflection on that company. What company would want to be known far and wide as 'the company with the dirty trucks?' Making sure this doesn't happen to image-conscious companies is the job of the Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment.

Mechanized, towed, and other equipment also need cleaning, some with very specialized cleaners, solvents, and rinses.

Some industries where these workers are employed include, in addition to those listed above, auto parts remanufacturers, automobile and truck detailing, hazardous waste removal and cleanup, bus washing and cleaning, and marine repair and service.

Typical Tasks

- ➔ Turn valves or handles on equipment in order to regulate pressure and flow of water, air, steam, or abrasives from sprayer nozzles.
- ➔ Presoak or rinse machine parts, equipment, or vehicles by immersing objects in cleaning solutions or water, manually or using hoists.
- ➔ Inspect parts, equipment, and vehicles for cleanliness, damage, and compliance with standards or regulations.
- ➔ Scrub, scrape, or spray machine parts, equipment, or vehicles, using scrapers, brushes, cloths, cleaners, disinfectants, insecticides, acid, abrasives, vacuums, and hoses.
- ➔ Mix cleaning solutions, abrasive compositions, and other compounds, according to formulas.
- ➔ Press buttons to activate cleaning equipment or machines.

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- ➔ Clean and polish vehicle windows.
- ➔ Rinse objects and place them on drying racks; or use cloth, squeegees, or air compressors to dry surfaces.
- ➔ Drive vehicles to and from workshops and/or customers' workplaces or homes.
- ➔ Lubricate machinery, vehicles, and equipment, and perform minor repairs and adjustments, using hand tools.

*Detailed descriptions of this occupation may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) at online.onetcenter.org.*

Important Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

- ➔ Public Safety and Security — Knowledge of relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.
- ➔ Customer and Personal Service — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
- ➔ Transportation — Knowledge of principles and methods for moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road, including the relative costs and benefits.
- ➔ Mechanical — Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
- ➔ Oral Comprehension — The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- ➔ Equipment Maintenance — Performing routine maintenance on equipment and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
- ➔ Active Listening — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- ➔ Near Vision — The ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
- ➔ Control Precision — The ability to quickly and repeatedly adjust the controls of a machine or a vehicle to exact positions.
- ➔ Manual Dexterity — The ability to quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, or your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.

Work Environment

Most vehicle washing is either done outside or in a sudsy, wet environment of a car or truck washing station. Workers can be exposed to water, detergents, and other cleaning products. The work is generally safe, though some injuries may occur when workers slip or fall while performing their duties. When cleaning industrial machines, cuts, abrasions, and bruises are common injuries. The most serious injuries occur when cleaners go inside tanks or machinery containing toxic fumes, and they are wearing faulty safety equipment. Fatalities have occurred in such situations. Strict adherence to safe work practices can reduce the risk to workers.

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Vehicles can also be cleaned in the field using mobile wash facilities. In order to avoid polluting local waterways, Cleaners can spread heavy water collection tarps and drive the vehicle onto the tarp before washing the vehicle. For smaller equipment, towable washing basins can be set up. The equipment can be pushed, towed, or driven into the mobile structure and then cleaned.

California's Job Outlook and Wages

The California Outlook and Wage table below represents the occupation across all industries.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers 2004	Estimated Number of Workers 2014	Average Annual Openings	2006 Wage Range (per hour)
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment				
53-7061	49,100	55,000	2,300	\$7.77 to \$10.25

Wages do not reflect self-employment.

Average annual openings include new jobs plus net replacements.

Source: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov, Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.

Trends

Employment in this occupation will grow at a slower rate than the overall job market.

Many commercial vehicle wash stations recycle the water they use for cleaning. These stations also are benefiting from better and safer cleaning products. Modern degreasing agents are helping keep California's trucks bright and shiny. Another trend in the industry is the increasing use of safer, nontoxic cleaning products.

Although some customers prefer the 'hands-on' cleaning by teams of car/truck washers, one new development is the 'Laser-wash' technology (an automatic, touchless car wash that carefully applies and monitors chemicals to the vehicle).

Mobile truck and equipment washing is also available in many locations, in addition to stationary truck washing stations. These operations permit the equipment owner to avoid the downtime in taking equipment to a permanent washing facility.

Training/Requirements/Apprenticeships

Most training is done on the job. Most employers prefer applicants with at least a high school diploma, but such an educational background is usually not required. There are no apprenticeship programs for this occupation.

Recommended High School Course Work

A general course of instruction is usually sufficient to satisfy the employer's job requirements.

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Where Do I Find the Job?

Use the *Search for Employers by Industry* feature on the *Career Center* page at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov to locate employers in your area. Search under the following industry names to get a list of private firms and their addresses:

- ➔ Automotive Repair/Maintenance
- ➔ Car Washes
- ➔ General Freight Trucking, Local
- ➔ General Freight Trucking, Long Distance
- ➔ Local Messengers and Local Delivery

Search these **yellow page** headings for listings of private firms:

- ➔ Car Washing
- ➔ Equipment Cleaning
- ➔ Tank Cleaning
- ➔ Truck Stops
- ➔ Truck Washing and Cleaning

The above is not a complete list. Many firms in Manufacturing, Automotive Repairing and Manufacturing, Wholesale, Retail, and Transportation employ Vehicle and Equipment Cleaners.

Where Can the Job Lead?

In large operations, a Vehicle Cleaner can move up the ranks to the position of supervisor or manager. Another option is for a Cleaner to purchase or build a new cleaning facility. A mobile cleaning facility is another way for the ambitious Vehicle Cleaner to enhance his or her earning potential.

Related Occupations

Automotive Service Station Attendants (see *Occupational Guide No. 30*)

Gardeners and Groundskeepers (see *Occupational Guide No. 320*)

Janitors and Cleaners (see *Occupational Guide No. 88*)

Laundry Workers and Dry Cleaning Workers (see *Occupational Guide No. 207*)

Other Sources

California Association of Regional Occupational Centers and Programs
www.carocp.org/carocps.html

Cleaning Equipment Trade Association
www.ceta.org

U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
www.osha.gov

International Union of Operating Engineers
www.iuoe.org